

Three-Dimensional Audio in the Vetronics Technology Testbed



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Abstract		
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Background - Who is ASTi?

- Started in 1989
- Founders from Hughes/Sperry/CAE
- Flight Simulation background
- Extensive hardware engineering capability
- Product base was PC and DSP – now many system elements
- Growing at 15% per annum

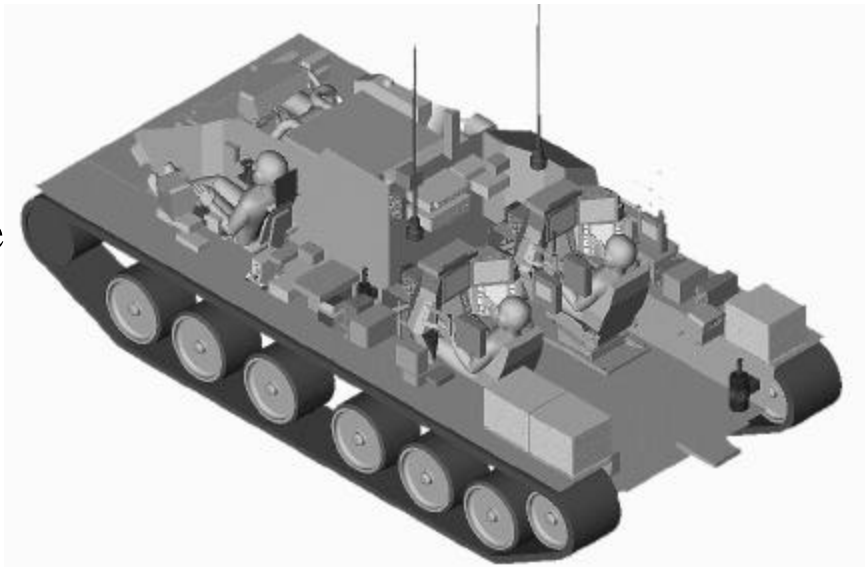


Background – What does ASTi do?

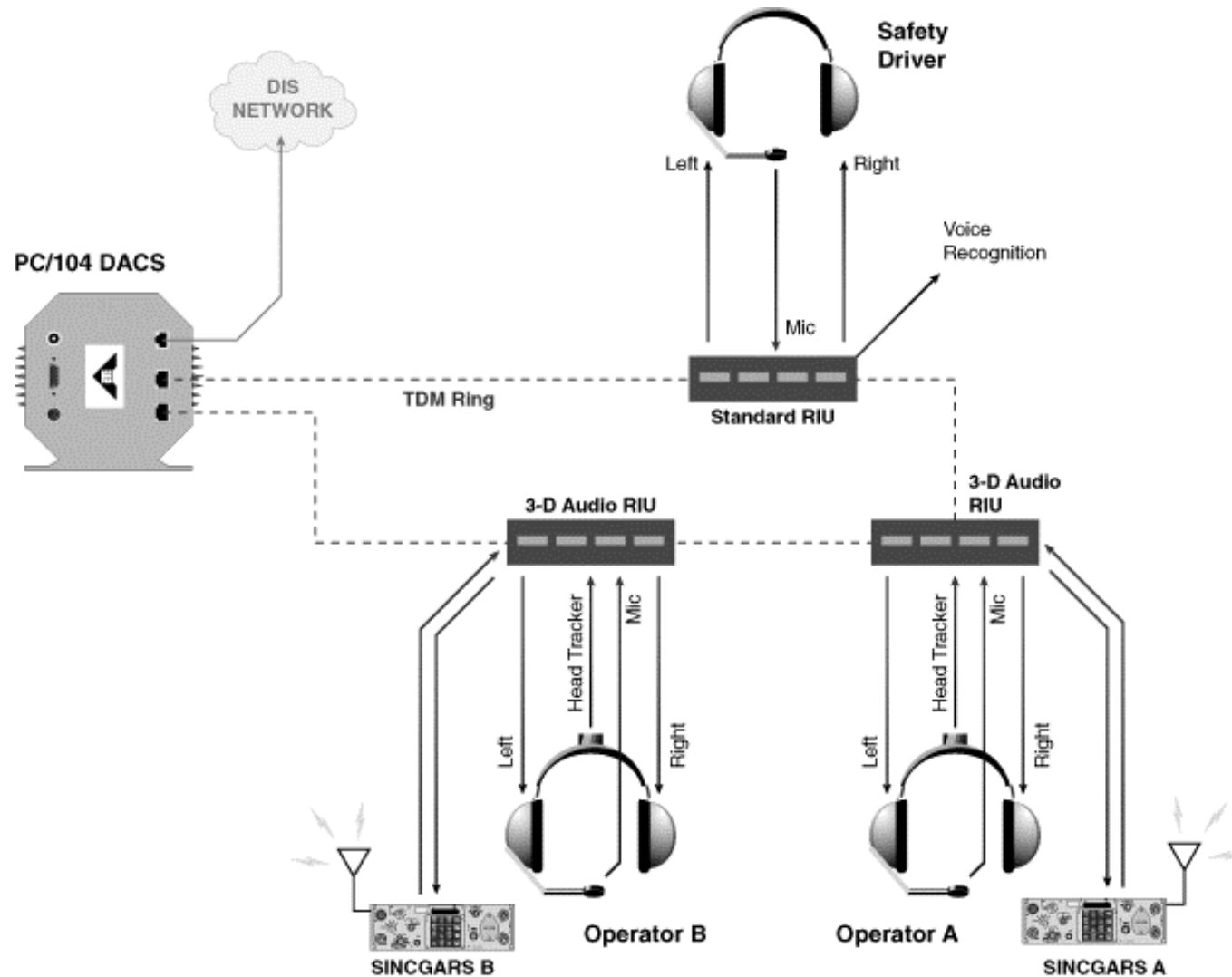
- Networked Digital Audio Communications Systems for the Simulation Industry, including:
 - DIS & HLA compatible simulated radios and intercoms
 - Aural Cues
 - Data Network → Live Radio Network bridge (Synapse)
 - Audio Record and Playback

Vetronics Technology Testbed Overview

- Key Technologies
 - CA ATD Soldier Machine Interface
 - Speech recognition
 - Battlefield visualization
 - Three-dimensional (3-D) audio
 - Distributed electronics architecture
 - Embedded simulation
- Two crew stations + safety driver
 1. Command, control, communications, driving operations
 2. Target acquisition and servicing operations



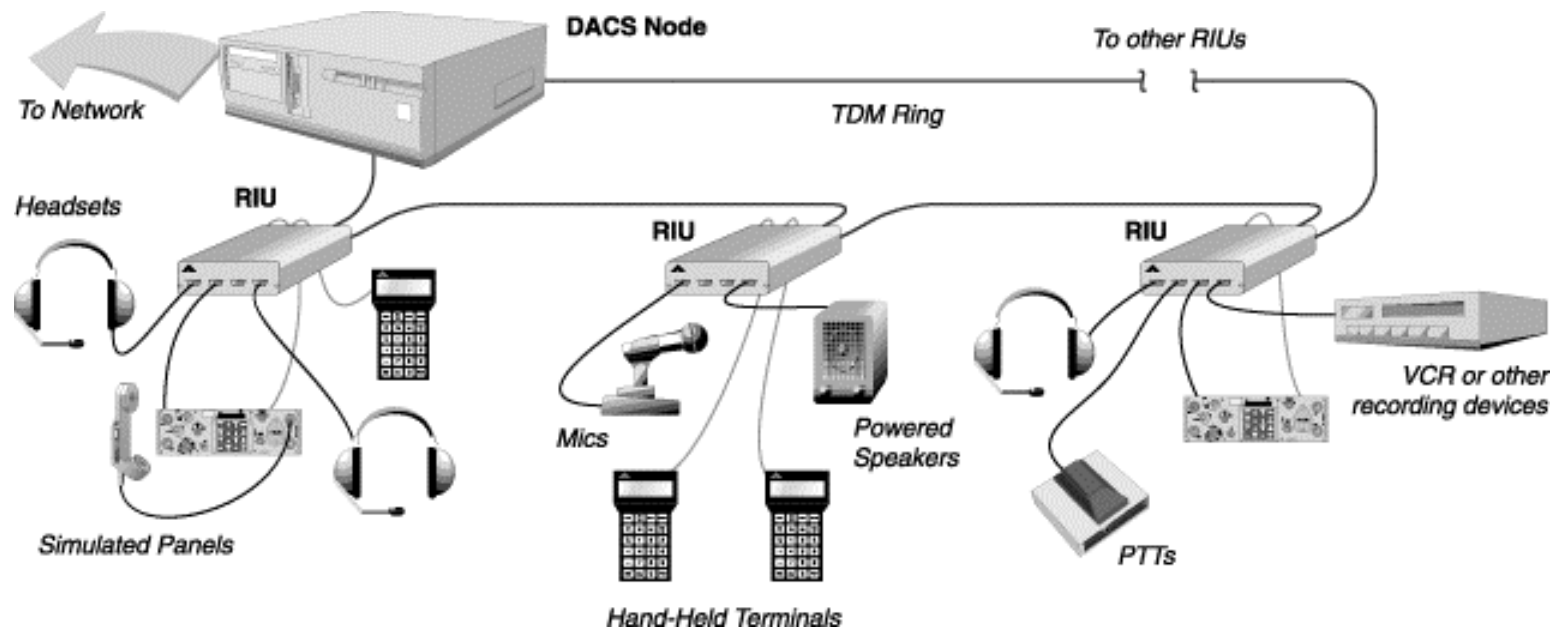
ASTi Communications System on the VTT



ASTi Communications System on the VTT, CTD

- Provides:
 - Crew intercoms
 - Warning tones
 - Interface to 2 live Sincgars radios
- ASTi Technologies used:
 - PC/104 form factor Digital Audio Communications System (DACS)
 - True Three-Dimensional Audio
 - Synapse technology for interface to live radios

Digital Audio Communications (DACS)



DACS Overview

- Distributed simulated radio/intercom environment
- DIS & HLA radio communication with voice compression
- Aural Cue capability
- TDM/RIU architecture allows fully digital audio distribution system
- Flexible interface supports direct connection to real audio sources

PC/104 DACS

- PC/104 form factor – industrial standard
- Compact, rugged chassis
- Made up of a “stack” of cards, cards measure 3.75” x 4.625”
- ASTi-developed custom PC/104 dsp (TDM) card, works with current RIU’s
- 64 MB compact flash storage – rugged, removable
- Same functionality as full size DACS



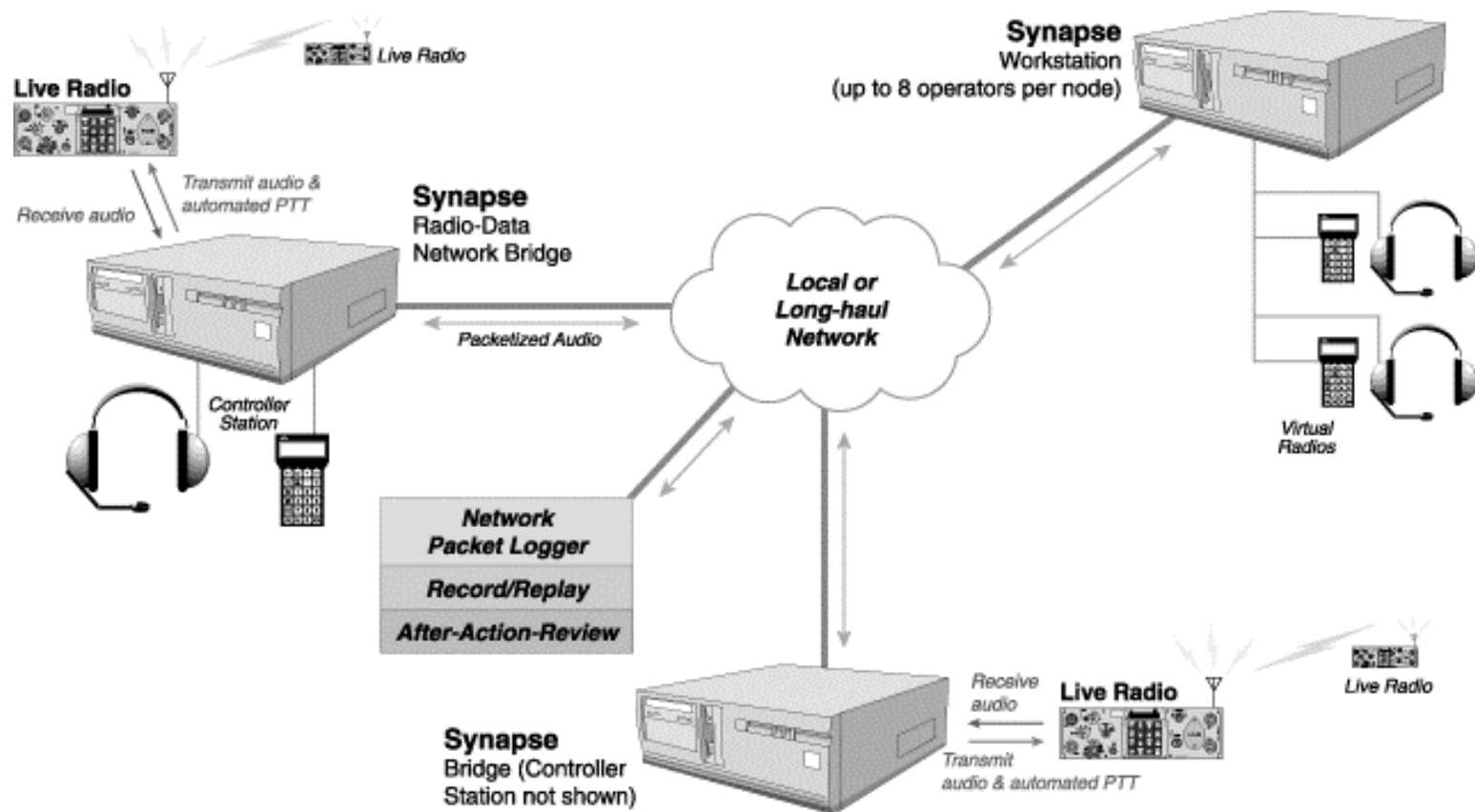
True 3-D Audio

- Why 3-D audio?
 - Spatially positioned voice streams and warning tones to simplify a complex audio environment and ease operator workload
- Key component of 3-D audio processing is the Head Related Transfer Function (HRTF)
 - Relates the spectral characteristics of an acoustic source at some location in 3-D space, to the spectral characteristics of the sound that reaches the eardrum
 - ASTi teamed with Bo Gehring of Focal Point Audio Technologies to implement HRTF filters

True 3-D Audio

- Implementation:
 - RIU codec maximum sample rate increased to 32 kHz for increased fidelity
 - HRTF implemented in DSP in RIU for scalability - Number of 3-D audio streams limited by number of RIU's, not the node CPU
 - Head Tracking capability to track operators head movements and adjust sound source location accordingly

Synapse System



Synapse System

- Link between live field radios and simulation networks
 - Base station radios receive audio over the air from field radios
 - Analog audio streams from base station radio are digitized, compressed and put into Ethernet packets
 - Ethernet packets are distributed onto the DIS network
 - Packets can be received at remote Synapse nodes anywhere on the network
 - Digital stream is transformed back into analog audio, and can be broadcast out other live radios if desired
 - Audio streams can be monitored, recorded, etc.
 - Instructors at Synapse workstation can participate in voice traffic using simulated radios

Conclusions

- Successfully demonstrated 3-D audio for crew intercom, radio communications, and warning tones in the VTT using an ASTi digital comms system
- System can be used to examine merits of a 3-D audio system in crew interface design